

a body having a first layer and a second layer, said first layer being of a thermoformable synthetic cellular material [so as to rigidify a shape of the cover] which rigidifies said body, said body having a first edge and a second edge;

a retaining means for permanently retaining said body [on] to said vehicle bodywork, said retaining means comprising a [thin portion] flap of flexible material extending from [one] said first edge of said body, said [thin portion] flap being permanently affixed to said vehicle bodywork [so as to be] such that said body is in hinged relationship to said [body] vehicle bodywork; and

a fixing means for releasably fixing said body to said vehicle bodywork, said fixing means for releasing from said vehicle bodywork when [the retaining device] said air bag is [actuated] inflated such that [the retaining device] said air bag inflates without tearing said body or said flap of flexible material, [said second layer being secured to said fixing means] said fixing means being secured to said second layer, said fixing means comprising a first strip of hook-and-loop material and a second strip of hook-and-loop material complementary to one another and detachably engaged with one another, one of said first and second strips being secured to said body, the other of said first and second strips being secured directly onto [to] said vehicle bodywork.

12. (Amended) The [apparatus] assembly of Claim 11, said body having an embellishment sheet extending [thereover] over a surface of said first layer opposite said second layer.

13. (Amended) The [apparatus] assembly of Claim 11, said fixing means being affixed adjacent [peripheral edges] said second edge of said body.

14. (Amended) An air bag assembly for a vehicle comprising:

an air bag which is capable of being inflated;

a bodywork having a housing, said housing receiving said air bag therein; and

a cover means affixed to said bodywork and covering said air bag, said cover means comprising a body having [a fixing edge] a flap of flexible material extending from one edge of said body, said flap of flexible material permanently secured to said bodywork, said body having [a retaining] an opposite edge detachably secured to said bodywork, said body further comprising complementary strips of hook-and-loop material engaged together, one of said complementary strips being affixed to said body, the other of said complementary strips secured directly to said [body work] bodywork, said cover means for releasing from said [bodywork] housing when said air bag is [activated] inflated so as to release the inflated air bag from said housing without [a] tearing [of] either said body or said flap of flexible material.

15. (Amended) The air bag assembly of Claim 14, said bodywork comprising a [distance piece] a projection [positioned in] extending outwardly of said housing, said [distance piece] projection having one end affixed to said [body work] bodywork and another end adjacent said [retaining] opposite edge of said body[, said retaining edge releasably affixed to said another end].

9 16. (Amended) The air bag assembly of Claim [13] 14, said body having a [formed zone] rounded portion at said opposite end, said rounded portion [cooperatively] releasably received within a [facing formed zone] groove formed on said bodywork.

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendments, Claims 11 - 16 remain in this case. Reconsideration of the rejections, in light of the foregoing amendments and present remarks, is respectfully requested. The present amendments have been entered for the purpose of placing the claim language into a more proper U.S. format and for the purpose of more clearly distinguishing the present invention from the prior art patents.

In the Official Action, it was indicated that Claims 11 - 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Steinke patent in view of the Hagen patent and further in view of the Ward patent. The previous Official Action was made "final".

In reply to the Official Action, Applicant has further amended independent Claims 11 and 14 so as to more clearly distinguish the present invention from the prior art. In particular, in amended Claim 11, it is indicated that the retaining means is for "permanently" retaining the body to the vehicle bodywork. It is further indicated that the retaining means is a "flap of flexible material." Independent Claim 11 further recites that the flap is permanently affixed to the vehicle bodywork so that the "body is in hinged relationship to the vehicle bodywork." Claim 11 further recites that the fixing means is secured to the vehicle bodywork and releasable therefrom without "tearing said body or said flap of flexible material." Similar limitations are found in independent Claim 14. Applicant respectfully contends that these limitations properly distinguish the present invention from the prior art patents.